DEAD SPACE™
SALVAGE
ANTONY JOHNSTON • CHRISTOPHER SHY

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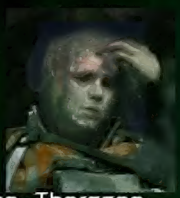
CAPTAIN JESSICA LI. Leader Magpie crew 1, de facto leader of the freelance miners. Ex-marine. Concerned primarily with money, but a good 'people person', hence her leadership role.
Li's ship is called Hunter's Moon.

STEFAN SCHNEIDER Second-in-command Magpie crew 1. Has a deep mistrust/hatred of authority after his legit mining business went under, blames government bending over for CEC too much.

BENEDYKT MALYECH Leader Magpie crew 2. Ex-CEC. Moderate Unitologist. Malyech's ship is the Black Beak.

JULIA COPLAND Second-in-command Magpie crew 2. Lifelong scam artist/freelance miner.

GATURA OKEKE Leader Magpie crew 3. Ex-commercial space pilot. Okeke's ship is the Sunset.



Magpie Crew 1: Wenbo, Thorssen

Magpie Crew 2: Venschiff, Gotheddir

Magpie Crew 4: Bellevin, 3 x unnamed

Magpie Crew 3: Yenner, Sanchez, Polyakov

Chang: High-ranking Government official

THE ORACLES Oracles are rare, and highly prized; part of a secret Government program designed for exactly the eventuality that's now occurring in the Dead Space universe. Because of the importance of their mission, Oracles are given a very free reign, and secrecy of their mission and true nature is paramount. This includes a licence to kill anyone they deem a threat to security, their mission, or Government integrity.

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SPACE
SALVAGE

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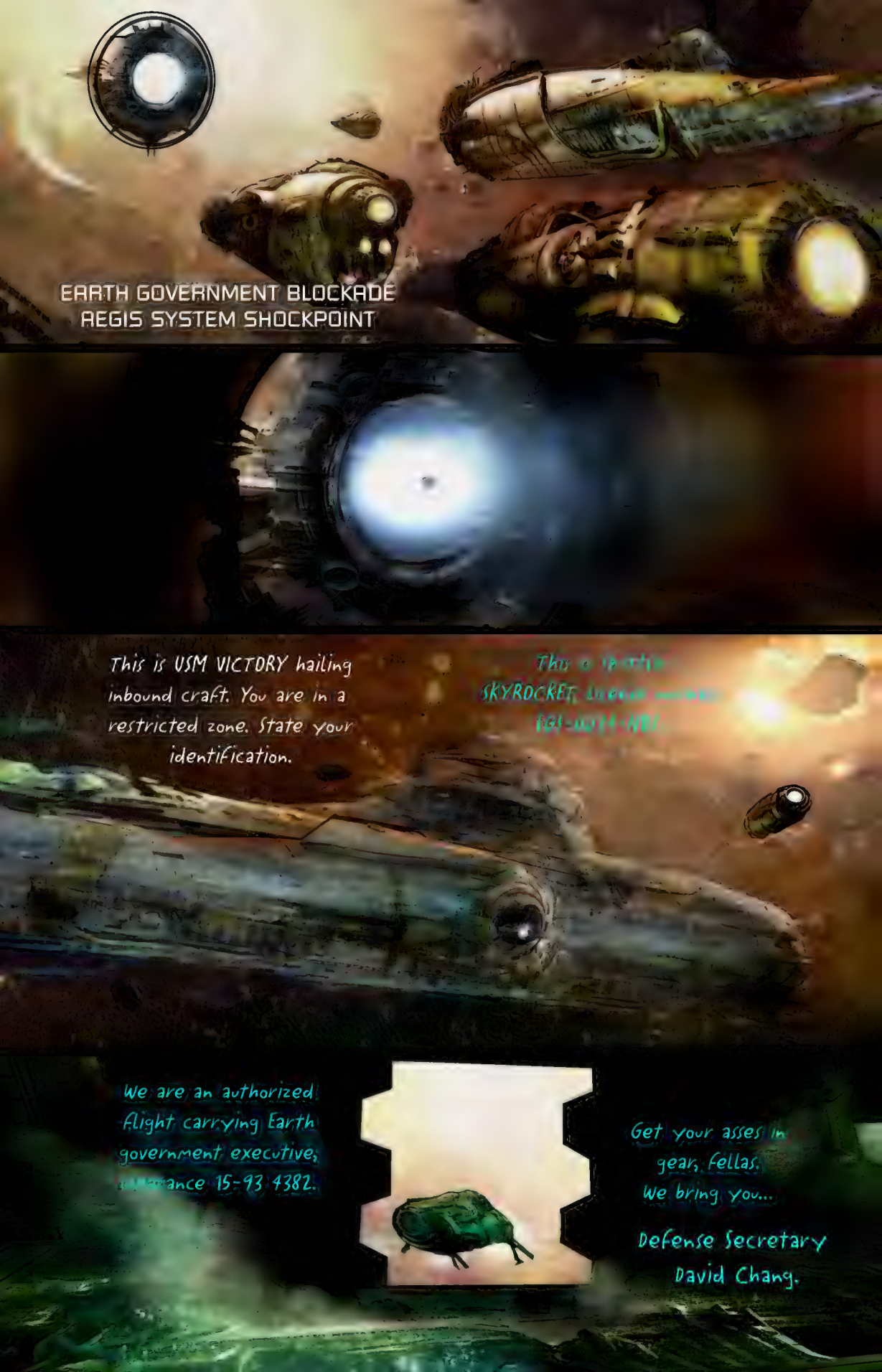
WHAT-
URK-
AAAAAAAAA

Captain!
Wake up!
Uhhh...
You should really try meds. Your mumbling's getting worse.
I'm fine, Julia.
What's up?
We hit a motherlode.
Venschiff's parked us right in the middle.
What are we looking at?
Iron, copper, the usual—
—but also vanadium, molybdenum, even platinum
Li's crew found platinum last month, right?
And Okeke the week before that, yeah.
There's definitely some valuable shit out here, if we can find it.

Ok then...
...Let's go get it.
MAGPIE SHIP BLACK BEAK
VIGILIS ASTEROID BELT
AEGIS SYSTEM

MAGPIE SHIP HUNTER'S MOON
Li, this is Malyech. You read?
Loud and clear, Malyech. What's your status?
Think we've got a winner here.
Good for a half dozen eggs, at least.
Sounds good. Everyone else has struck out today, so get Copland to post the co-ords and sit tight.
I'll alert Okeke and Bellevin.
Li out. Ok.
Around 85 percent. Another two, three weeks and we'll be done.
Schneider, how full is the nest?
Home, sweet home.
You mean cash, sweet cash.
Who wants to go home?
Well, Captain, some of us actually have sex lives.

When we're not swimming through rocks and dust in some galactic backwater, that is.
Funny, I thought that was your sex life.
Ouch.
And on that note...
...Let's go get some action.

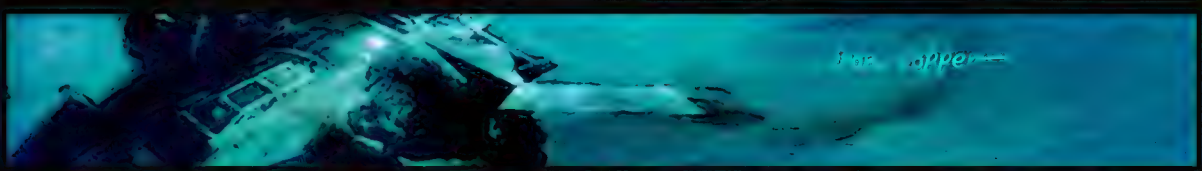

EARTH GOVERNMENT BLOCKADE
AEGIS SYSTEM SHOCKPOINT
This is USM VICTORY hailing inbound craft. You are in a restricted zone. State your identification.
This is [illegible] SKYROCKET, [illegible] [illegible]
We are an authorized flight carrying Earth government executive, [illegible]mance 15-93 4382.
Get your asses in gear, fellas. We bring you...
Defense Secretary David Chang.

Welcome aboard, sir. How was your flight?
Even less comfortable than your mother's bony ass, Captain.
Save the small talk and update me on the recovery missions.
We've dispatched a team to Aegis VII.
The disaster almost ripped the **core** in half, so they're attempting to stabilize while searching for **Marker** evidence.
If it comes to a choice, any evidence is more important than a planet.

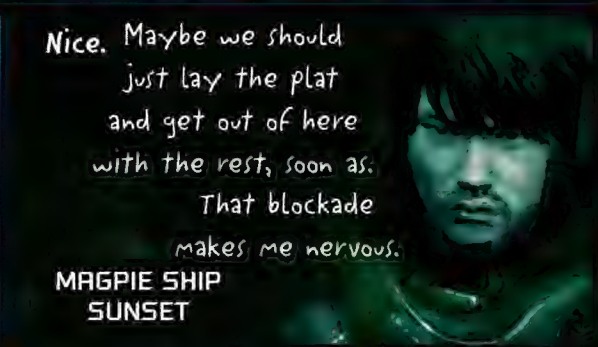
They're aware of that.
What about the Ishimura?
Unable to locate it.
Short-range scans are loaded with particle interference, probably a side-effect of the disaster.
And since the system has been officially off-limits for almost two hundred years, we don't have long-range records...?
Don't expect me to pull classified scans out of my ass, Captain. If I had them, I'd use them.
All we had out here was a covert listening post, but that went silent weeks ago.
Understood.
We have shuttles sweeping the system for visual, but that could take a while. It's a big area.
Of course, there is an alternate contingency.

Really?
And what's that?
What if the Ishimura was destroyed in the disaster?
Are we sure it's even out there?
Don't even think it.
The Marker was on board that ship, and if I leave here without it, some teenage punk will have his feet under my desk before I even reach Earth orbit.
Yours, too. Of that, I I am very sure.
Now bring me the Ishimura.

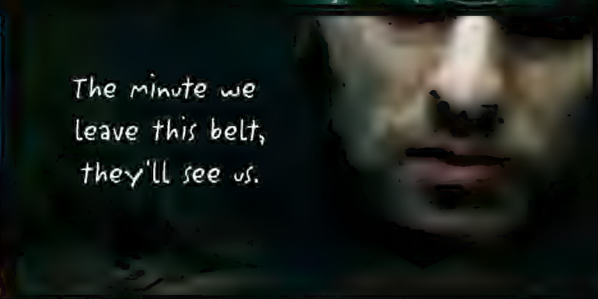
Everyone present? Good. let's get rolling. Malyech, what's the breakdown?

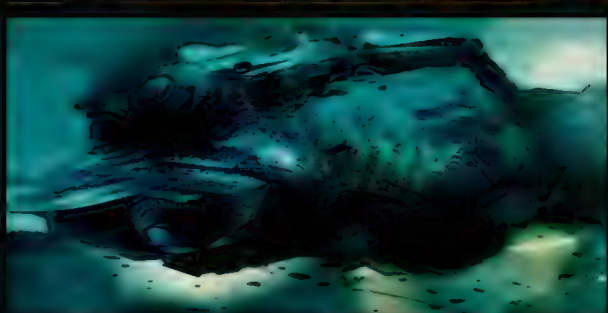

I've... upper—

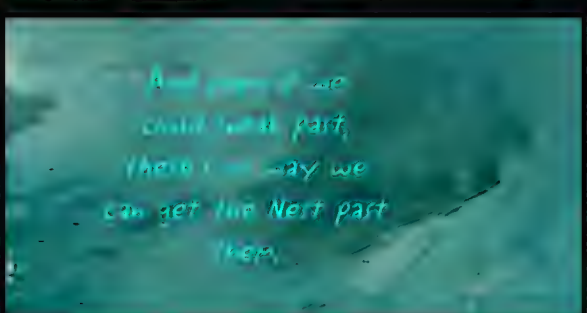
—vanadium, molybdenum— and about a quarter ton of platinum.
MAGPIE SHIP
BLACK BEAK


Nice. Maybe we should just lay the plat and get out of here with the rest, soon as. That blockade makes me nervous.
MAGPIE SHIP
SUNSET

That blockade is why we can't cut and run, Okeke.
MAGPIE SHIP
HUNTER'S MOON


The minute we leave this belt, they'll see us.



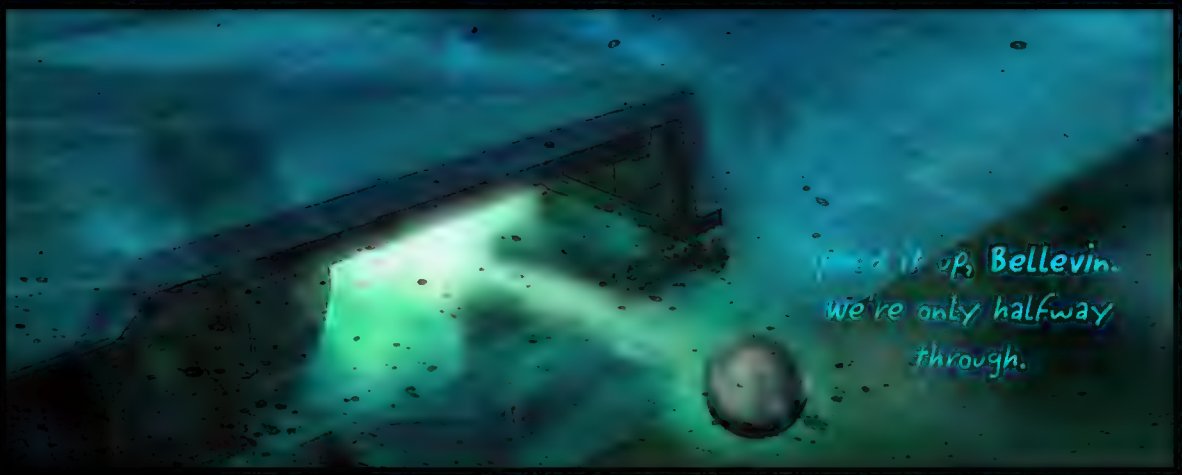

A... ...we could... ...part, There's no... ...way we can get the Nest past them.

All right, everyone clear the w
I'm just saying. This was a nice, quiet operation until that planet went dark.
Now we've got ships crawling all over the system.
Okeke, if yo gonna piss your pants at a few goverment boats, mayb you shouldn't ap illegal mining ship
Shock generators powering up.
Schneider's right.
Besides, the planetcrack must have been illegal, too.
So I doubt the government is going to stick around for too long.
Hopefully long enough to rip CEC a new asshole. Couldn't happen to a nicer bunch of guys.
Ring is all green.
Focal vector eight-one-two-mark-seven, event horizon approx two hundred.
Collapse duration, estimate three seconds.
Shock in 3, 2, 1...

...SHOCK!
Shock is green. Gravity wave imploding, singularity collapse in 3, 2, 1...
...And we're done.
Egg is laid.
Bellevin, secure the egg.
Wilco.

MAGPIE SHIP
LIBERTE
Nest is opening and standing by.
Roger that, Schneider.
And, much as I hate to say it, I doubt the government will do any more than slap CEC'S wrist.
Egg is secured.
What do you expect? They're both up to their eyeballs in Unitologists.
Hey, maybe Okeke and Malyech could give them a secret handshake to let us all through the barricade.
Fuck you, Schneider. I told you before, the Church ain't like that.
Egg is in the Nest, I repeat, egg is in the Nest.
Jesus christ, all of you put a cork in it! We've got a half dozen more eggs to lay, and I'm already sick of your voices.
Hey..
...if the man can't take a joke...

Forgive me, gentlemen.
We don't get to see many stars on Earth. Pollution saw to that centuries ago.
I wasn't aware there were active Oracles in this operation.
There are higher authorities than even you, Secretary Chang.
Of course, I just don't like being blindsided.
We are not authorized to interface with military or civilian operations, except as they directly concern our priorities.
Is that supposed to be reassuring? What exactly are your priorities?
Retrieval, and
Especially secrecy.


[illegible] it up, Bellevin. We're only halfway through.

Li, I went freelance so I didn't have to take orders any more. You're not in the Marines now.
I'll remember that next time I come up with a job that's going to make us all a few hundred grand.

All being the operative word. Just because you brought the shockring, doesn't mean you can do this without us.

Copland's right.
Without her vast knowledge, it would have taken us a whole extra day to find these rocks.

Fuck you, Schneider.
You couldn't afford me.

What's that?
Not sure.
Malyech, can you quit downloading porn for a minute? You're screwing up the shockring readings.
Y'know, maybe I should rig up a loop that says "Fuck you, Schneider" every thirty seconds...
...I could sell it to every magpie in the galaxy and make a fortune.
Captain.
Private comm from the Sunset.
Aw, Jesus...!
MALYECH+OKEKE 4 EVA.
Okeke, what in the name of Altman is this?!
What's what? I didn't do nothing.
HAHAHAHAHAHA!

Schneider, you dick! How'd you do that?
Sorry, fellas, trade secret. And a misspent youth, but you already knew that.
Stefan, that's enough. Quit screwing around.
Oh, come on. Even you have to admit that was a little funny.
Not out loud I don't.
Thanks, Bellevin. Nice to know some people are still working around here.
Maybe not for much longer. That interference is back.

What the—?

Bellevin!

GET OUT OF THERE!

SHIT.

THE NEST!
Bellevin.
There's eggs all over the place!
EVERYBODY MOVE!
Thorssen!
I'm trying! This hunk wasn't exactly made for racing—
Shit! We're hit!

Li! You all right?
Just a scratch! You two get after that ship!
WENBO! STATUS!
Sealant grid's holding for now, Captain, but we've got to set down somewhere to repair this properly!
You heard the man. Thorssen, get after that ship!
Venschiff! Where the hell did that ship come from?!
I don't know!
It just... appeared!

If that thing
belt—
—it'll bring every ship in the system down on us!
I told you we should have bugged out of here!
Engage gravity tethers!
Are you insane?
That thing's twenty times our size!
I'm sure that's a great comfort to Bellevin and his crew.
There's no drive signature, it's just drifting.
Two or three of us on reverse thrust should be able to stop it!
Worth a shot.
Grip it!
Full retro thrust!
Tethers engaged!

Crap!..
It's pulling us!
Just hold on...
...We're right behind you!
It's slowing!
Keep firing retro thrust!
Better hope it works soon, Captain! The hull's straining under the force...!
Relax, Wenbo... ...we've got it.
Good work, everyone.

Listen up!
This is a clusterfuck, but we have to start thinking about salvage.
That thing vaporized the Nest, and with it, our take home.
So we-
Captain...
What?!
You're not going to believe this.
I've identified the ship...

...It's the Ishimura.

We're still in bad shape from that hit. Okeke, follow us on board.
Malyech, do a flyby and check the ship's condition.
Oh great, leave me out here.
You're best qualified to judge the salvage state, Malyech, and we may not have much time.
Quit whining.
Systems status is bad. Some auxiliary power, and emergency systems in place, but it's patchy.
The old girl's been kicked around, and then some.
You hear that, Okeke? Grav and O2 are out in multiple areas.
There's quarantine lockdowns all over the place, and Schneider says half the trams and doors are inoperative.
Quarantine?
What the hell happened here?
Maybe we'll find out.

Hull's shot to crap. Multiple asteroid impact.
Whole segments missing... Salvage is all this bird is good for now.
But there's enough intact to make a sale meanwhile.
Captain, why are we even talking salvage?
This is the Ishimura, for god's sake. We should ransom it to CEC, maybe even the government.
Not a good idea, Julia.
Or did you forget most of us have open warrants?
We go anywhere near the government, or CEC, with this and the only possible ending is all our asses in jail.
Then they'd take back the ship anyway. Everybody loses.
Whoa.
Venschiff, slow up...
...Someone want to tell me what the hell those are?

SHIM
Airlock's holding.
Reminds me of a girl I once knew.
But keep your masks handy, in case we step through a door somewhere and suck
The fuck is all this stuff?
Smells like something died.
Like I said, reminds me—
Unless you want to swallow this O2 mask, Stefan, give it a rest and tell me what we're looking at.
Honestly, I got no idea. It's organic, but... Oh, shit.
Oh, shit!
What?!

Look in there. This place is filled with the stuff.
So?
So the scans say it's a 70% match for human compound!
The Ishimura must have been drifting through the belt when we fired the shockring.
Maybe this ship was the interference.
Just outside the event horizon, and when I hit the ring...
Boom! Like a slingshot!
And this is the crew...
Get a grip!
We did not do this!
How do you know? There's been cases before, bad shockpoints that smear the crew all over the walls...
Did we kill a planetcracker's entire crew?

Li's right, Schneider, you're way off.
There's no way this ship has supported a crew for a long time.
Whatever happened, it was before we got here.
Listen to the man. Don't go paranoid loco on me, all right?
Shit...
Now come on, let's head for the bridge.
If you think it smells bad out there, wait till you get in here—

What—SHIT!
Aaaaaah!
JESSICA!
What just happened?
The door... told you some of them were... malfunctioning.
I can probably rig it. Give me a minute.
You OK? Don't want you ending up as bone soup like the crew, here.
We don't know it's the crew.
For sure, I mean. We don't know for sure.
Got it.
Should hold, but it's a raw job, so be careful.
Can't vouch for it's stability, if you know what I mean.
This time Schneider, you go first.
So much for gratitude.

Captain, they could just be asteroid crystals...?
Negative.
Crystals would have broken up on impact—unless they're something really solid, which would mean they're valuable anyway.
And look at the positions. It's too wide an area, too scattered.
I think we're looking at something special, here. They...
These markings. Altman be praised, they almost look like...
Like what? Captain, can you hear me?

No...
Please...
Please don't—
Oh. Oh...

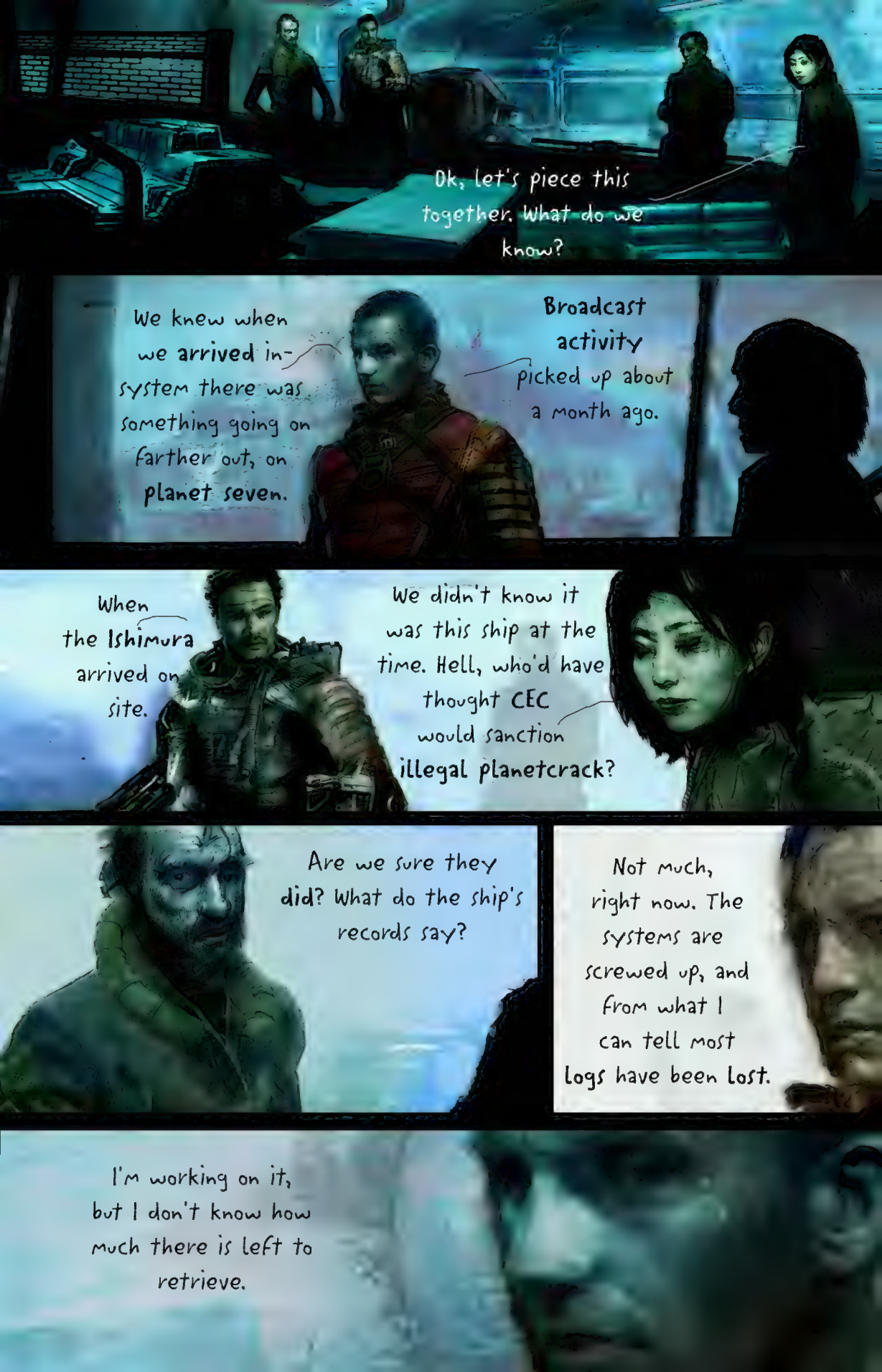
...My god.

Altman be praised.
What—
No—
Stop...!

I've got him— Gotthedir, reel us in!
He's out of it again!
We've got you, Copland. Easy does it.
What happened? I don't remember...
Shh, it's all right now.
Bring them in with a remote. We need to get a closer look at them.
Everybody does.
You spaced for a minute, that's all. Those crystals seemed to freak you out.

Copland was right, the shockpoint drive is dead. Looks like the whole of engineering took a serious beating.
Can it be repaired? Even a re-conned shockpoint's worth plenty.
Hard to say.
I'd need to take it apart to be sure. How's it look in medical?
Going through now. It's a slaughterhouse.
RAD COUNT RISING. CURRENT LEVEL 0.37 SIEVERTS.
What the fuck is that?
I set it to auto-update on significant changes to radiation levels.
Hey, for all we know, this ship is jumping hot.

So what do you say, Okeke? Repair or scrap?
Scrap.
It's worth a fortune either way.
I say break it down while we wait for the blockade to lift, then rent another Nest and bring it back to transport the parts.
You're assuming the government is going to leave any time soon. What if this ship is why they're here?
I have a very bad feeling about all this.
All the more reason to break it down as fast as we can.
Look, I know this is all a little weird, but Okeke's right. I'm not giving up payday just because you're freaked out.
Everyone get to the bridge, and we'll talk this over. I'll call Malyech in
Sure thing.


Ok, let's piece this together. What do we know?
We knew when we arrived in-system there was something going on farther out, on planet seven.
Broadcast activity picked up about a month ago.
When the Ishimura arrived on site.
We didn't know it was this ship at the time. Hell, who'd have thought CEC would sanction illegal planetcrack?
Are we sure they did? What do the ship's records say?
Not much, right now. The systems are screwed up, and from what I can tell most logs have been lost.
I'm working on it, but I don't know how much there is left to retrieve.

I thought planetcracker logs were blackboxed.
They are. It might have been deliberate... Maybe even connected to whatever made the ship go dark.
Which was right around planetcrack. Sensors showed a major instability on the planet, remember. Had to be some kind of accident.
But what? So the planet's unstable... why would that wipe out the crew?
Screw the crew.
You have to take a look at something.
Especially you, Okeke.

Embedded in the hull. At first, we thought they were just asteroid debris, but...
...Well, see for yourself.
What the fuck am I looking at?
Altman be praised.
What is this, Unitology hour?
Fuck you, Schneider.
As a matter of fact, it is.
These symbols match descriptions of the Black Marker!
You're looking at pieces of a holy artifact... shards from a marker!

Let me get a look at that. What's the material?
NO!
These objects are holy, not trinkets for heathens to paw at!
So...
...You're saying these are valuable?
I am saying this must be why the government shut the system down! They knew they were here... They want to hide them from us, just like the original marker!
Shit, he's right. This is what they're after.
All right, then, to hell with the ship. Let's ransom these rocks to your Church, instead.
What?! That's blasphemy!
Be practical. If these are what you say, then Unitologists get what they want, and we all get to retire.

HEATHEN!
Sonofabitch.
Jesus!

I've got him.
Someone find the brig, and put him in it.
Maybe a couple hours in there will calm him down.
You can't do that! He's a Captain, just like you!
He's fucking nuts. You did see the part where he hit me, right?
Come on, Benedykt.
Maybe if you showed your peers some respect, it wouldn't have happened in the first place.
Christ, whatever. Really don't want to deal with this, right now.
Relax.
Copland's always had a boner for Malyech.
Or whatever the female equivalent is, I guess.

Venschiff...
Copland... you've got to stop them...
Sorry, Captain, but you were out of line. Li's a blowhard, but—
—she's right this time. You need to calm down, get your head straight.
Don't make me throw you in.
You don't understand... None of you understand...
The truth... at last.
With respect, Captain, don't give me that Unitology crap.
Practicing your faith is one thing,
but attacking Li over some worthless bits of crystal...
Get some rest.
I'll come check on you in a while.
...Goodbye.

How is he?
He hasn't been himself, Bad dreams, keeps pacing out on us..
He'll be fine, just needs some rest.
Hey, I got something from the records. It's fragmentary, but... Well, those shards are nothing compared to this.
According to logs, they pulled an entire marker off that planet.
You gotta be shitting me.
For once, no. Don't think this is going to make me apologize, though. Your religion is still full of crazies.
Damn.
Is it still on board?
Far as I can tell—
—Yeah

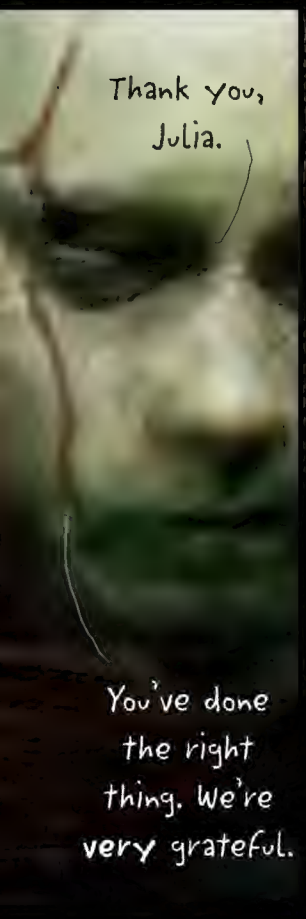
Shit! We can't let the government get their hands on this!
Not without paying up, sure. That must be what they're after, not some pissy little shards.
Hold on—
That's not what I meant!
Oh, shit.
Copland.
She's heading for the blockade.
Goddamn it! She took some of the shards!
The bitch is going to sell us out!

Ransom it or rescue it, if the church is right about the size, we're not moving a marker **anywhere** without a **Nest**. Which means we need to repair this ship.
Okeke, get your crew back to **engineering**. See if you can repair the **shockpoint**—
Strip the shockring for parts if you have to.
On our way.
What about us?
Just keep watching the **scanners**. If a government ship comes anywhere **near** the belt, I want to know.
Wait, where are you going?
To see if **Malyech's** come to his senses. We may need every man we can get.

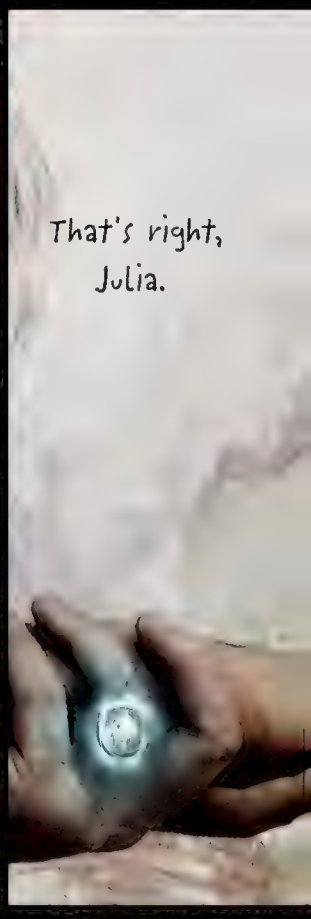
I know where you can find the Ishimura.
Sure you are...
Little magpie, why should I let you waste my time for a moment longer? We are very busy.
...But I figure you can make time.
For this.
Come with me.

Backtrace her arrival vector.
Find out where she came from.
Yes, sir.
Do you need anything?
A glass of water?
I'm fine...
Just tired... I guess I got a headache, or something.
So we're going to make... a deal, right? I know you're looking for the ship...
A deal? Of course, of course...
...And here are the negotiators now.

I'll leave you gentleman to it.
Thank you, Secretary Chang.
How are you feeling, Julia?
Uh... better, actually. I had a headache, but... yeah, I feel fine.
Good. that's good.
Now tell us everything.
She's spilling her guts out in there. These guys are good.
Sir, we've projected the source vector. She came from the asteroid belt.
We can pin it to within two hundred clicks.
Good enough. Take a small security crew, nothing big. I don't want to make a fuss unless we have to. If there are other magpies on board, arrest them.


Thank you, Julia.
You've done the right thing. We're very grateful.

So do I get a reward now, or something?
I mean, this is valuable, right?


That's right, Julia.

A reward...

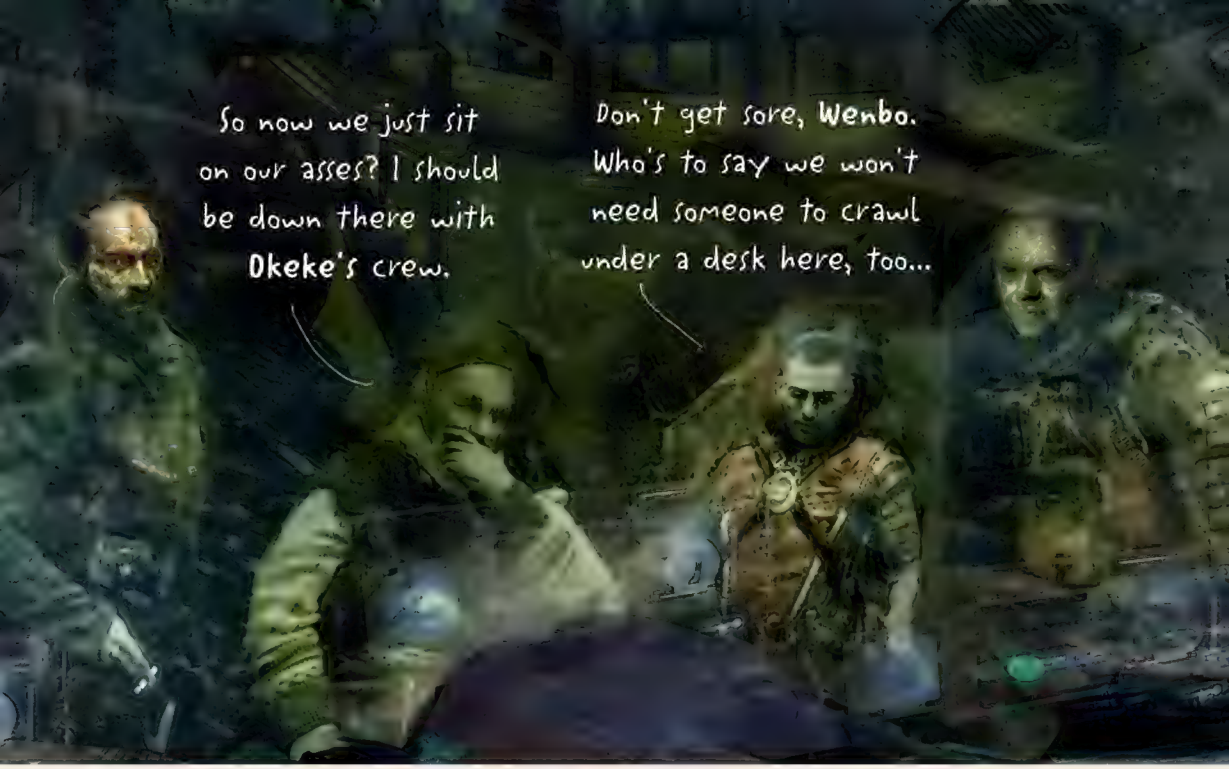
...Or something.

Who's there...?
Bellevin? I... I don't understand...
Relax, Benedykt. Don't be alarmed.

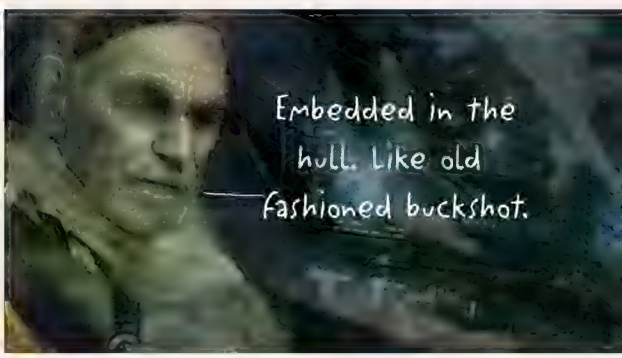
But you have to wake up.
I'm—I'm not awake already?
Not truly. Not yet.
You have to stop it, Benedykt. I know you don't want to. But you must.
No... no, it's just my mind again. Maybe I should get some meds...
They won't help you.
You have to help yourself.

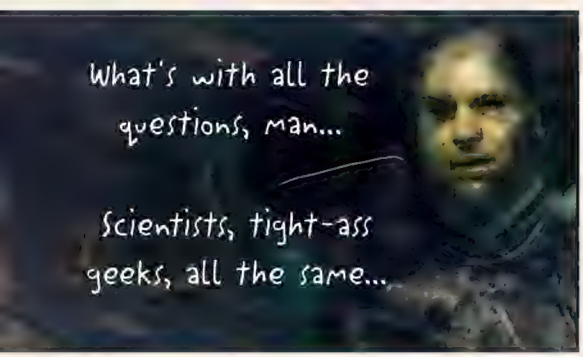
How?
I—I can't move_ I feel trapped...
...I need something to make me whole.
You already have it.
I can feel it...
something's coming...

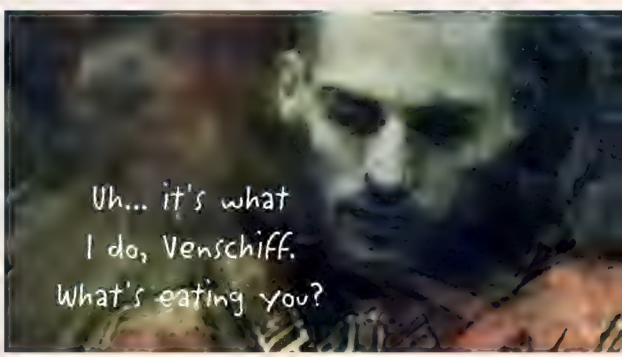
Goodbye
Benedykt...


So now we just sit on our asses? I should be down there with Okeke's crew.
Don't get sore, Wenbo. Who's to say we won't need someone to crawl under a desk here, too...

Something's bugging me about these shards. Where did you find them again?


Embedded in the hull. Like old fashioned buckshot.


What's with all the questions, man...
Scientists, tight-ass geeks, all the same...


Uh... it's what I do, Venschiff. What's eating you?

You're on their side, aren't you?

You're all in it together! Trying to hide the truth!
Vorschiff, come on!
Nnnngh!
AKK!
Get him... off...!
What the hell are you doing!

God Dammit, what is going on around here?
What was that?
Log scanner's finished. Let's see what we've got.

It's still fragmented, but there's the Marker, the planetcrack schedule, and something about...
Oh, shit. That can't be a coincidence.
Oh, that's just great. And now we're on the ship, so it's fucking with us, too?
The entire colony went crazy. Then they brought up that Marker, and the same thing happened on the ship.
That's the weird thing.
Far as I can tell, it's not on the ship. No sign in the cargo bay. Where the hell...
...Oh.
Man, Okeke's gonna be pissed about this.

Who's there?
Identify yourself!
Jessica, this is Stefan. Where are you?
On my way to the brig. Did someone come after me?
No, but we had another incident. Venschiff flipped out.

Great.
Even better.
So you're telling me Malyech's probably not recovered yet?
I'm not sure he ever will. According to what I could piece together of the logs, that damn Marker sent everyone on board crazy.
Maybe we should just cut our losses, after all.
I don't think we have to worry about that.
Reckon the Marker's —not on board anymore.
Are you serious?!
I think those shards we found are what's left of it. Something big happened here, Jessica.
No shit—
God dammit, who's there?
Whoa! You OK?

Keep hearing movement behind me, but there's nobody there...
Listen, don't tell **Okeke** about this marker thing. I don't want him to think repairing the **shockpoint** isn't necessary.
You got it.
I reckon we've got an hour, tops, before the **military** gets here. If we can't repair before then, I say we just **abandon** and get out while we can.
Malyech?
Where are you?

Venschiff definitely put him in here, right?
That's what he said. Although, seeing as he then went nuts and tried to strangle me...
Venschiff? He's not a marker-head.
I know. He just started freaking out at me, talking a load of paranoid crap.
Jenna, you're breaking up.
It's not the comm. There's some kind of hissing...

Jessica?
Can you hear me?
Captain, come in!
Do you read?
CAPTAIN!

FUCK!
What happened?
I don't know, it cut off. But Malyech wasn't in the brig, and she thought someone was following her...
Screw this.
Too much weird shit going on around here.
Let's all go down there and—
Jesus fu—!

HOLY SHIT!
MY GOD—
Don't just stand there!
—THORSSEN!
FIRE!
THEY'RE FUCKING DEAD, THAT'S WHAT!
The hell are these things?!
Uh... you were saying?

This ain't happening!
This ain't happening!
This has to be what killed the crew! We've got to get off this ship!
Die, you bastard!
Shoot that relay!
What? No, that's gonna—
AAAAAAAAAAH!

Holy shit...
Captain?
Jessica, dammit!
I don't know if you can hear me, but we need to evacuate, right now!
...Goddamn, guys—
There's some kind of life form on board, they're lethal...
—I'm sorry.
...And they're all over the ship.

Loud and clear, Schneider. Just taking a look around the engine room, and I gotta say, it doesn't look good.
Okeke! Are you there?
the engine! Get back huttle bay, and watch backs along the way!
Say what? I'm not going anywhere without that marker!
The Marker's not on the ship! But something else is!
What in the name of Altman are you talking about? Is this one of your oh-so-hilarious jokes?
Who's there? Come out from behind there, we won't—
—Hurt you...

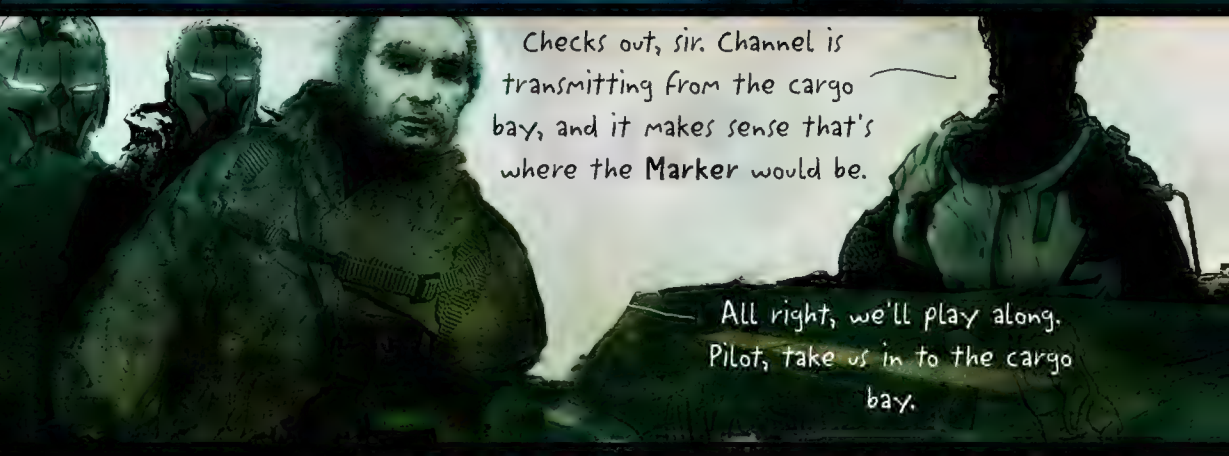
Aaaaah!
Okeke, get the hell out of there!
Okeke! Talk to me...
Okeke!
Okeke...

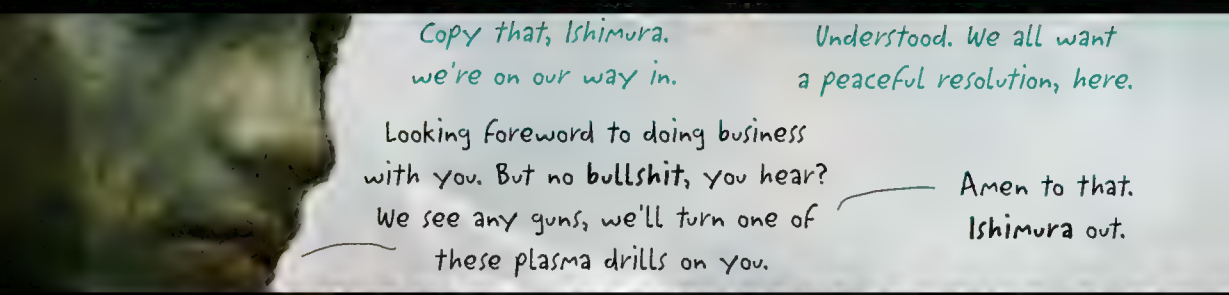
All clear.
Of humans, anyway.

Re-animation's already started.
Could make our job a lot easier.
Still, we have to be sure. Patch into the ship's frequency...
...Let's hear what they have to say for themselves.

Fuck this. I'm out of here.
This is USM Shuttle Intrepid hailing the Freelancers in control of USG Ishimura.
Stand by for boarding
I say again—
—This is USM Intrepid hailing
he Freelancers
control of USG
Ish—
Ok, think about this.
Intrepid, this is the Ishimura.
You guys are after this Marker, right?
Our mission is classified. You will surrender yourselves to our authority—
Yeah, whatever. Listen.
We know what you're here for.
So let's do a deal.
A deal?

All we want is the ship, for salvage. You can have the Marker, we can't move it anyway.
We're in the cargo bay right now. Why not come on in, and we'll talk about it?
GOVERNMENT SHIP
INTREPID


Checks out, sir. Channel is transmitting from the cargo bay, and it makes sense that's where the Marker would be.
All right, we'll play along. Pilot, take us in to the cargo bay.


Copy that, Ishimura. we're on our way in.
Understood. We all want a peaceful resolution, here.
Looking foreword to doing business with you. But no bullshit, you hear? We see any guns, we'll turn one of these plasma drills on you.
Amen to that. Ishimura out.

Go to hell.

Cargo bay? Cut them off?
No.
Wait...
...He lied, spoofed it somehow. Transmission actually came from the bridge.
That was Schneider, right? He's good.
I'll inform the Intrepid.
No, it'll tip off the freelancers. The Marines' deaths will buy us time to reach the bridge before Schneider can leave.
I can activate the bridge's quarantine locks to keep all inside.
Good idea.
Do it.
But don't tell the marines anyway.
It'll save us the trouble.

USG ISHIMURA
CARGO BAY
Approaching now, sir.
Everybody listen up! Keep your sidearms safe until I give the order!
If they try anything—
—fire at will
But let's keep it
All for now.
Look at this mess. The old girl took one hell of a beating.
I don't see the Marker.
Scan for it.
It might not show up anyway, sir. Our intelligence indicates—
Goddamn it just do it Sergeant.

Nothing, sir. But I'm not picking up any lifeforms, either, so it might not mean anything.
Dammit.
All right, let's get out there.
Hello?
I'm Captain Amise. Come on out, and let's talk.
I don't see anyone, Captain.
Should have known they'd play some kind of game. Spread out, find them—
—and the Marker!
C'mon guys, we just want to get the Marker and go.
We're not cops, OK?

I can hear you back there.
Stop fucking—
—around.
ABORT! ABORT!

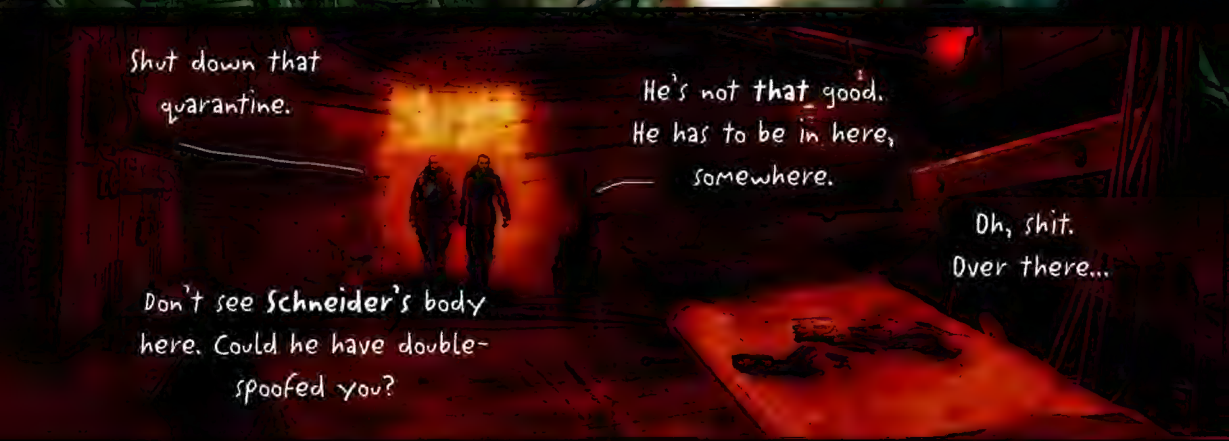
WOOPWOOP
WOOPWOOP
Sounds like you guys found the G-men.
Just like you found all my friends.
Just like you found Li.
Maybe it's time—
WOOP
WOOPWOOP
WOOPWOO
—You found me.

FUCK!
Oh, what?
Now the quarantine kicks in?
RAD COUNT RISING
CURRENT LEVEL 0.39
SIEVERTS
Yeah, why am I not surprised.
There's gotta be some way to override this...
...A stealth ship?
Wait, who the hell are these clowns? They didn't come in through the cargo bay...
You're kidding me?!
Not good.
Stefan, my friend, it's time for Plan B.

The fuck is going on here!
Immediate evac, go! Go! Right now, pilot! Launch!
That bastard Chang's going to answer for this—
—fuck up.

Security Crew just bought it.
Forget them. The freelancers are the prime target.
They know where the Marker is.

If they're not already all dead, of course.


Shut down that quarantine.
He's not that good. He has to be in here, somewhere.
Oh, shit. Over there...
Don't see Schneider's body here. Could he have double-spoofed you?

Don't tell me it's his corpse. Are we going to have to scour this whole ship ourselves for the Marker?

I don't think that'll be necessary.

We thought the shard Copland had was a one-off, some kind of slice for analysis.
But this is more than anyone would require for samples...
All right. Retrieval is a bust. So now we find Schneider. Figure out what he knows before he goes public.
No, no, no!
FUCK!
You think he's still alive.
But how did he get out? The quarantine didn't lift until we got here.
Look over there, and tell me...
...Don't EVA lockers normally hold four suits?

Ok... shuttle bay's ahead, not far now...
...I swear, if I make it out of this, I'm blowing the whole goddamn whistle.
Oh, for—
—of course they can survive in a vacuum. Perfect!

And here come the creepy twins. This is some deep shit, Stefan.
You! Hold it right there!
Sorry, fellas. Something tells me I'm dead either way—
—Shit, and maybe sooner than I thought.

Guess they want me alive... for now.
All right.
Shortcut time.

He's gone back inside.
Has to be making for the shuttle bay.
Then let's get there before he does.
Direct route?
He'd be stupid not to. I'll follow him.
You take the vents, try and cut him off.

Mr Schneider, I presume.
No sudden moves, please.
Outflanked, huh?
So I guess you know the layout of this ship alot better than me.
We did our homework.
Good.
Then you'll understand how serious it is...

...When I tell you that I just remote piloted our shockring into the Ishimura's engine bay, set for an event horizon of maximum radius.
Now, do I need to explain what happens if I press this button?
Bullshit.
You don't have the balls.
Really.
My entire crew is dead. Our Nest was destroyed. The oh-so-precious Marker, it turns out, is in itty bitty pieces.
And even if you bastards don't kill me, I'll rot in jail for a lifetime.
I literally have nothing to lose.
You don't even know the half of it.
Whereas you, I'm guessing, want that Marker pretty bad. Even in pieces.

No, I don't. You could turn around right now and grab those shards. Instead, you're chasing me...
...but not shooting. Why is that?
We need to know what you know.
What you saw.
You could have just asked.
You don't possess the language to tell us.
They're closing in.
Regrouping.
I know.
SSSSS
SS
SSS
Shit.
I get it now.
The madness, those weird symbols... It's all connected, right? It makes people crazy, and those fucking monsters are a part of it! What are they?

An unfortunate side-effect. They're not important.
And neither are you, Schneider. Your death is meaningless...
but the knowledge you've already gained is worth a fortune.
And you want to cut me open, take a peek.
Sorry, boys, but those shards are all that's on offer.
One false move, and I'll hit the shockring.
RAD COUNT RISING
CURRENT LEVEL 0.43 SIEVERTS.
Ah Shit—
You lying bastard.
I knew you were bluffing.

Sorry, guys
STOP!
SCHNEIDER!
I WILL SHOOT YO—
Aaah,
my arm!
AAAAAAA

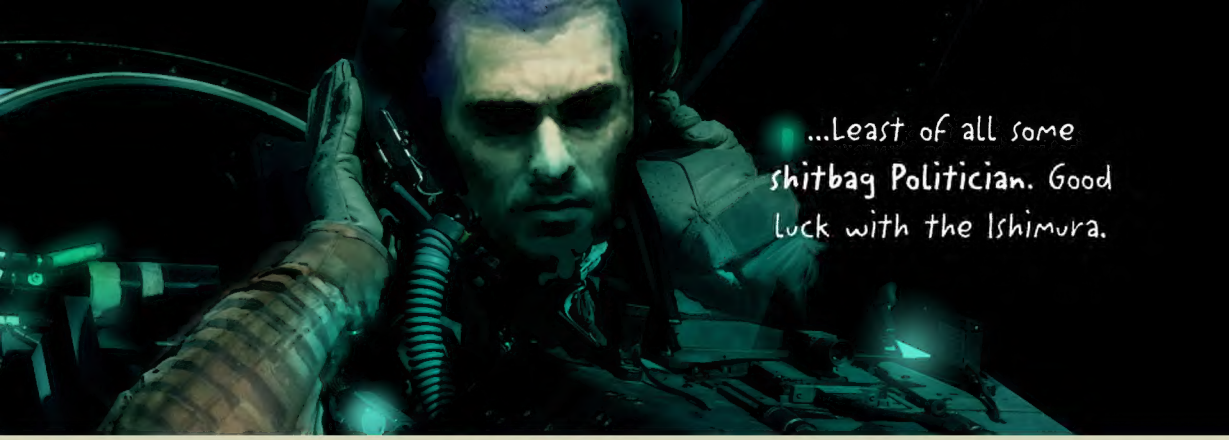
Too many—
—We're screwed.
WELCOME ABOARD!
Funny.
I was going to say the same thing.

HA!
I am guessing you won't be needing this.
Off my ship, dammit! How the hell am I supposed to—

—Get out of here.
All right, baby, let's see what you can do.

Attention, military blockade. This is... hell, I don't even know what this ship is called.
I'm one of the magpies you sent your creeps to kill.
They failed.
Now I want to speak to whoever's in charge.
ID is confirmed. It's the stealth ship your friends came in.
They're no friends of mine, captain.
This is Defense Secretary David Chang.
Who am I talking to?
My name's not important, Dave...
...Only what I have to say.

The Ishimura is inside the Vigilis Belt, round about Solar Mark eight-one-five.
Far as I'm concerned, you're welcome to it.
Who the hell is this? How did you get access to that stealth ship?
Don't you dare!
Remain where you are and await a military escort! You are hereby detained, on my authority!
The original owners were... detained. Have to say, this is a pretty cool ship.
Even got a small shockpoint drive. Talk about the march of technology...
Sorry, Dave, but nobody has "authority" over me...


...Least of all some shitbag Politician. Good luck with the Ishimura.

You'll need it.

DEAD SPACE SALVAGE

EMPIRE